

JACK LONG'S Two THANKSGIVINGS

Seated by the glowing embers in the gloomy old hall, watching the flame retreat, advance, flare up in splendor, and then die into a dull glow, was Jack Long. Thirty-five years had elapsed since Jack first saw the light of day, and his life had been as full of joy and misery, of light and shadow, as the ordinary life of mankind.

Typical of the ever-burning glow was a love within a heart which ten years had not smothered.

Like the fire flame leaping high and stinking low, was the hope in his breast.

As Jack sat there alone, gazing into the fire, thoughts of bygone days came over him, troping at his memory's call.

Mingled with these memories was a fair and radiant maiden, with hair of raven and eyes of azure. This image conjured up an vivid and lifelike was his young, laughing sweetheart, Queenie Graham, as she looked on that Thanksgiving night so long ago.

It would be ten years on the morrow since he had last gazed upon the dimpled, smiling, roguish face which he loved so well.

They were then betrothed, and she wore the betrothal ring which he had placed upon her finger only a few weeks before.

How vivid that picture came before his eyes. Ten years seemed to have rolled backward, and he was a youth of 25 again, and Queenie Graham, his adored one, a blushing maiden of 18.

The old-fashioned farmhouse, with white, oaken floor, and the boys with their sweethearts, and the jolly old fiddler who played half asleep, only awaking to call out in deep, stentorian tones:

"Swing partners to place!"

The lamps swinging from the ceiling flooded the scene with the most brilliant light.

Gay laughter and jest told of light hearts, and happy faces glowed to the soul-stirring music of the "Irish Washerwoman," swayed off by the fiddler.

Jack's love, like all true love, did not run smooth. In fact, love began to run smooth, and was made less odious when she smiled on Sam Brown, and in winning partners Sam held her hand too long and squeezed it too ardently to suit the jealous lover.

"Queenie, you're a flirt," he declared. "I saw you wink at Sam Brown."

She turned on him with proud, flashing eyes, and said:

"Don't be surprised if I call you another. You kissed Susie Bell."

"That's not true."

"Yes, you did, for I heard her tell Mary Courtwright."

"It is false, Queenie," he cried, in his indignation. Susie Bell was a round-faced, ugly country girl with no attractions, and tongue given to mischief making.

The dance went on, and the lovers quarried with it. As Jack and Queenie whirled in the giddy mazes of the dance, that silly, childish quarrel waxed hot, entrancing her beauty with every angry word she uttered.

At last, as the "set" was over, she suddenly jerked the betrothal emblem

from her finger, and thrusting it into his hand said:

"Here is your ring; you can marry Miss Sue."

With a heavy heart the angry Jack Long donned his topcoat and winding his muffled about his neck to keep the chill November air from his throat, went out into the night never to look upon the face of that adored being again.

He heard from Queenie occasionally, and at last that she had gone east to live. How far east or what part of the east, he did not know, and was too proud to ask.

She was lost to him forever, and he grew melancholy. He went west, to be as far from her as possible, and engaged in business at a frontier town, with cowboys and ranchmen for his associates.

Then came the mutterings of war with Spain.

He had always loved the weak, and agreeing to the first call to arms. Rough

riders were wanted, and he had learned to mount the wildest broncho.

He enlisted, and hurried off to the front. At Santiago he landed, and to the march to the city was in the first skirmish.

Then came that noble charge on San Juan Hill. He led the charge, amid dust and heat, fighting like a mad man until struck down, faint and bleeding, he lay on mother earth to die.

"Queenie, Queenie, oh, my long-lost loved one, shall I never see you more?" he was heard to murmur, as he lay away from the field. Somehow there was something in this piteous cry which touched the hearts of those who heard it. A newspaper man who was

near sent with his report the following brief sentence:

"A soldier, wounded and dying, while being carried from the field, was heard to exclaim with his last breath: 'Queenie, Queenie, oh, my long-lost loved one! No doubt this piteous appeal wrung from a noble heart was to some faithful sweet-

heart who had deserted him years before."

This simple little paragraph had been copied and recopied, and disseminated, and made the theme for countless stories and ballads.

But Jack, who uttered it, didn't die. He lived to return to America, was honorably discharged, and resolved to pass another Thanksgiving in the old neighborhood where his young days had been spent. So he returned, after an absence of nearly ten years, and was at the house of his father on that evening, gazing sadly into the fire which seemed to reflect his own aching heart.

What was life to him now?

That chief charm, that only light to his soul, had gone out, leaving all gloom and darkness.

He was like an old man.

His hair, once dark as the raven's wing, showed traces of silver in it, and his face, so handsome, clear and fresh, now had the lines of rare old age.

Though he sometimes smiled and seemed an apparition of gaiety, his mother knew that his heart was sad.

But that mother had a hope that happiness would yet dawn on her son.

She had a plot of intelligence she had not broken to him. Queenie Graham, after an absence of ten years, had returned to visit an aunt.

There was to be a great Thanksgiving party at Jack's grandmother's, the oldest lady in the neighborhood, at which she was to try all the young folks for "Grandma Goodwin" took great pleasure in young people.

Queenie would no doubt be there, and she determined that Jack should meet her. The mother knew that her son's pride would keep him away if he knew Queenie was to be there, so she kept that surprise a secret from him.

The little knew how love had humbled Jack's pride.

In the vest pocket of the veteran, he carried the self same ring which Queenie had thrust back on him ten years before. It was next his heart when he stormed San Juan Hill, and he hoped it was the claim the bullet would pass within the golden circle of his youthful love, and that he might die with her name on his lip.

But fate destined Jack to live. He was once more home, among friends who had crowded about to hear him tell of the wild charge and the storm of death.

Would he go to grandmother's next day to the Thanksgiving dinner? Yes, he would.

The old carriage was loaded with jolly young folks and middle-aged people, and among them the veteran of San Juan.

Grandma's table groined with plenty of goose and turkey, pie and casseroles, nuts and apples in abundance.

But what was far more precious to the ex-soldier was a radiant face he had loved so long before.

He thought she had suffered as well as he. They were too much surprised at meeting that neither would call what another was being stirred to the other's heart.

"QUEENIE, OH, MY LONG-LOST LOVE!"

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Queenie's beauty was matured and seemed more heightened by time. She was far more lovely than before. And the first moment's shock of surprise pride assumed control, and placed each other on the guard.

They looked to break the ice, but neither wanted to make the advance.

After the hesitating was over the happy group assembled in the great parlor to talk over pleasant reminiscences or indulge in a quiet tete-a-tete.

Then someone, may his tribe increase, said:

"I brought my violin. I will play and tell off; let us have a dance tonight."

The suggestion was greeted with a hearty shout, and the young fellows rushed to find their partners.

Right quickly they all took their places on the floor, when they found that they wanted a just one couple more.

"Come, come, Soldier Jack, come a partner," cried a voluntary musician.

Moved by some uncontrollable impulse, Jack arose and went to where Queenie Graham sat, and, bending low, whispered:

"Will you come and dance 'Haste to the Wedding' with me?"

She assented, and all were at their places.

Then someone on the piano accompanied the violin in that sweet old melody, "Haste to the Wedding."

There is always an opportunity in a quadrille for a shy word now and then between partners.

"All join hands and circle to the right."

"I want to ask you something," he whispered, when they were at their places again.

"What is it?"

"First four forward and back again. And away they went."

When next they had an opportunity to thrust into his hand an item clipped from a newspaper, and it was of a young soldier carried bleeding and dying from San Juan Hill, murmuring:

"Queenie, Queenie, oh, my long-lost loved one, shall I never see you more?"

"Was that you?" she asked.

"Yes," he answered.

Then he took her hand. It trembled, and her azure eyes grew dim.

"Distance all."

It was several minutes before either could speak.

The sweet-tuned violin, accompanied by the piano, poured forth such soul-stirring music as can be found only in that precious old air, "Haste to the Wedding."

He was about to speak when the musician "calling off" shouted:

"Gents to places—all pronounced!"

It gave him an opportunity to recover himself, and when next they glided across the room he whispered:

"Ray, Queenie, will you keep that and promise you made long ago?"

She looked up at him, smiling through her tears.

Ten years of misery and suffering had passed since he held that hand.

Oh, it was reward for all that suffering!

"Queenie, I have it yet," he whispered, taking from his vest pocket the betrothal ring which he had carried all these years.

"It has never left me, for I always had hoped that a time might come when I could restore it to the finger where it belonged. It was with me on that dark, stormy day at San Juan Hill, where I saw so many noble men die."

"I carried it over my heart and prayed that if I fell some squallid bullet might pass through the hand of love to reach a heart that beat for you. Oh, Queenie, did you know that you have never—"

"Swing partners to place!"

What an abandonment was that old fiddler and the dance to Jack.

When he next got an opportunity he whispered:

"Never been out of my mind."

GIRL'S BATTLE WITH ALLIGATORS

Rescues Her Baby Sister from Saurian's Jaws.

Savannah, Walston, a pretty Texas girl, is the heroine of the little town of Tule, on the Haystack, an arm of the Brazos. She made herself famous a few days ago by killing two monster alligators that had entered her mother's cottage during the night. Few men would have been capable of performing the feat that this brave girl accomplished. The house occupied by Mrs. Walston stands within twenty feet of a large irrigating ditch, across which there is a small foot bridge. The yard gate opens at this little bridge, and a wire fence extends some twenty feet either way along the bank of the ditch and then turns at a sharp right angle and joins the

from the jaws of one of the saurians. Mother and daughter were now standing up on the bed, but they were not sure that they occupied a position beyond the reach of their hungry assailants. The noise awoke the little negro, and the women saw him running towards them. They shouted to him warning him of the danger, and telling him to run outside of the yard. Evidently he did not know what was the trouble, for he ran towards the bed, stumbling over one of the alligators, and falling with his head right into the mouth of the other.

The women were helpless to defend the unfortunate little African. The monster crushed the little negro's

an end to the existence of the two persons. Her brother's gun was hanging against the wall on the opposite side of the room. She determined to take advantage of the first opportunity and get hold of the weapon. Her mother tried to dissuade her from such a desperate venture, but the moment that the big saurian left the room she sprang out on the carpet and ran after the gun. The alligator heard her steps and he pursued her to the bed, snapping his hideous jaws and making a noise that would have paralyzed a less courageous girl.

Miss Savannah says that she had never shot a gun before in her life, but she had often seen her brother handle a rifle and she had some knowledge of the way the liner was worked in order to load and eject the shells from the barrel. Her heart bounded for joy when she found the magazine of the gun full of cartridges. Aiming well at one eye of the big bull she fired and had the satisfaction of seeing him cower about over the carpet as if there was something hot



corners of the house. This makes a small front yard which has but one gate.

It is supposed that the two monster alligators were prowling along the irrigating ditch in search of food when they encountered the foot bridge, and in crossing over it they may have pushed the little gate open. Miss Savannah Walston was sleeping on a cot on the little porch in front of the open door of her mother's room, and a little negro boy 4 years of age was lying under a china tree in the yard.

Mr. Walston, who was sick at the time, occupied a bed in the parlor of the cottage, and her little baby was lying in a cradle within easy reach of her hand. She says that she heard the alligators for some moments before she called her daughter.

The moon was shining almost as bright as day, and when Miss Savannah was aroused by her mother she rushed up on her cot and put one of her hands on the head of one of the monsters. At that instant a little dog that had run out of Mrs. Walston's room was snarled between the jaws of another alligator at the young girl's side.

In her fright she sprang over one of the monsters in order to reach her mother's bed. Both of the alligators pursued her across the floor and one of them felled the cradle over.

The little boy fell out on the carpet. Miss Savannah had reached the bed in safety, but when she heard the cries of her baby sister she sprang back on the carpet and rescued the child almost

head between its jaws, and the women could plainly see the child's blood streaming over the carpet.

"To aid in the terror of the scene," says Mrs. Walston, "the other alligator seized the little negro's legs and tore the child's body to fragments before our eyes. We did not know what to do. At one moment we thought of springing out on the floor and trying to escape and run to the house of a neighbor."

While the women were hesitating in their fright a curious thing happened. On the previous day Mrs. Walston had ordered a large mirror which she had set on the floor against one of the walls of the parlor. The male alligator caught the reflection of his own image in this glass and with a furious noise he pounced at it and shattered the costly mirror to fragments.

This seemed to enrage the creature and he began to bellow and run about over the house, overturning everything that came in his way. Miss Savannah says that she threw pitchers, wash bowls, glass tumblers, and boxes of matches into the monster's mouth, and he would crush and swallow such things as if they were delicacies that tickled his palate.

While the smaller of the two creatures was overturning the stove and destroying the kitchen furniture the other remained in the parlor terrorizing the two women. He would doubtless finally have succeeded in overturning the bed if Miss Savannah had not adopted a plan of battle which put

inside of his head. She pumped a few more shots into his body behind his forelegs and it was not long before he rolled over lifeless. The female came crawling into the room.

Savannah sent a hot bullet into his body. The furious animal turned and ran straight towards the bed with wide open jaws, and, furious with pain and rage, she got her forefoot on the bed, and the women were now more frightened than before. The horrible jaws of the maddened creature were close to their bodies. Savannah pushed the barrel of the gun into the alligator's mouth and fired. It was a fortunate shot. The big ball tore through the full length of the creature's backbone, and it fell, quivering and lifeless, on the carpet.

The smoke had hardly cleared and the women had not yet dared to venture from the bed when a neighbor, a neighbor, entered the gate and asked if they were having a battle with alligators. The man could hardly credit his own eyesight when he saw the carcasses of the two big alligators lying on the carpet. Other citizens of the little town were soon gazing in wonder at the dead alligators and the wrecked furniture. They proved to be two of the largest alligators ever killed in the country. The people of the little town have voted Miss Savannah the bravest girl in Texas, and the young son of the place gave a ball in her honor and crowned her mascot of their military company and the queen of the hunting club.

The answers were equally as enlightening. The miner, we learn, "always had a donkey to pull him out of the mine, which is full of gas and chokes him." One future citizen informs us that "the chief occupation of Philadelphia is taking fiery looks across the river."

Hebberlin Disposes Farm Hands.

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QUEEN "FACTS"

About Animals Told by Pupils of a Philadelphia School.

A teacher in one of the public schools of the Quaker City who has a sense of humor, has culled some remarkable bits of information from her examination papers. Questions dealing upon the habits of animals were found to be particularly amusing. One small boy declared, in a fit of pique, that "the lion is the queen of beasts."

From another more practical "lion has a great big mouth and roars something fearful." One evident ad-

mirer of the world-renowned hero, Colonel Cody, tells us "the buffalo is the one animal of the temperate zone, which belongs to the Wild Man," and adds: "The horse is an animal what plays and dances as soon as he hears music." Another brilliant one gives the somewhat startling information that "the rhinoceros has a strong nose, and that 'legs is a domestic animal, which chews bones.' We are also told: 'The llama is a beast of burden and we get clothes out of his back.' Another animal evidently in the clothing business is the seal, which, we are informed, 'makes coats.' Upon other sub-

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